

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MADRID 05266 071946Z

63

ACTION EUR-12

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AMEMBASSY ROME

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AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, SP

SUBJECT: MEDIA AND PUBLIC POLITICAL REACTION TO SUAREZ APPOINTMENT

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. MEDIA COMMENTATORS AND POLITICIANS WERE
GENERALLY SURPRISED BY KING'S CHOICE AND BELIEVE THAT
SUBSEQUENT REFUSAL OF KEY REFORMIST MEMBERS OF CABINET --
PRINCIPALLY AREILZA AND, TO A LESSER EXTENT, FRAGA --
CONVERTED ORIGINAL LIMITED CHANGE IN PRESIDENCY INTO
CRISIS WITH BROADER IMPLICATIONS. FERNANDEZ MIRANDA IS
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PAGE 02 MADRID 05266 071946Z

SEEN AS THE MASTERMIND. OBSERVERS OFTEN DEFINE THREE

MAJOR TASKS FACING NEW GOVT: 1) COMPLETION OF FIRST PHASE --
LEGISLATION OF POLITICAL FREEDOMS.
2) OPENING GOVT PARTICIPATION TO SOME ELEMENTS OF
DEMOCRATIC OPPOSITION, AND 3) CONCERTING A SOLUTION TO
PRESSING ECONOMIC PROBLEMS. POLITICAL PARTIES OF THE RIGHT
(ANEPA, UDPE) BUT NOT THE QTE BUNKER UNQTE HAVE
SUPPORTED SUAREZ' APPOINTMENT WHEREAS CENTER GROUPS
ARE WITHHOLDING DEFINITIVE JUDGMENT AND LEFT OPPOSITION
HAS CRITICIZED CHOICE. SOME CONSIDER LIFE EXPECTANCY
OF NEW GOVT LIMITED AND SOME HAVE EXPRESSED FEAR OF
DELAYS. SUAREZ' JULY 6 SPEECH HAS ELICITED CONSIDERABLE FAVORABLE
COMMENT AND MEDIA SEEM WILLING TO GIVE HIM A CHANCE.
END SUMMARY.

2. WITH EXCEPTION OF "ALCAZAR" -- THE BUNKER'S HOUSE ORGAN -
THE MEDIA AND MOST POLITICIANS SUPPORTED ARIAS' REMOVAL
BELIEVING THAT THE MEASURE MEANT THAT A MORE COHESIVE
AND STRONGER GOVT, CAPABLE OF COMPLETING THE REFORM
PROGRAM, WOULD RESULT. THE DESIGNATION OF ADOLFO SUAREZ
TOOK MEDIA BY SURPRISE. SUBSEQUENTLY, MEDIA VOICED
CONSTERNATION THAT AREILZA -- THE GOVT PERSONALITY
WITH THE MOST CREDIBILITY IN THE DEMOCRATIC OPPOSITION --
FAILED TO STAY.

3. AREILZA'S REFUSAL HAS PROVOKED MUCH COMMENTARY.
THE PRESS HAS IDENTIFIED THE ABSTENTION OF MOST REFORMIST
MEMBERS OF ARIAS' LAST CABINET AS THE SPARK WHICH IGNITED
A POLITICAL CRISIS NOT FORESEEN AT THE MOMENT OF
ARIAS' RESIGNATION.

4. COMMENTATORS HAVE GENRALLY SAID THAT NEW GOVT FACES
THREE MAJOR TASKS: 1) COMPLETION OF LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM OF
FIRST PHASE OF TRANSITION, (THE CORTES SESSION SCHEDULED
FOR JULY 6 TO APPROVE REVISION OF THE PENAL CODE WAS POSTPONED.)
2) BRIDGING THE GAP WITH THE DEMOCRATIC OPPOSITION TO ENSURE
A BROAD BASIS FOR THE REFERENDUM, AND 3) A CONCERTED PROGRAM
TO SOLVE A DETERIORATING ECONOMIC SITUATION.
SUAREZ HAS RECEIVED PUBLIC SUPPORT FROM TWO CONSERVATIVE
POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONS ORGANIZED UNDER THE 1974 STATUTE/LAW:
THE UDPE WHICH HE LED BEFORE GOING INTO THE CABINET
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PAGE 03 MADRID 05266 071946Z

AND ANEPA, WHICH TOGETHER REPORTEDLY HAVE AROUND 100,000
MEMBERS. SILVA MUNOZ' CONSERVATIVE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC
UDE HAS NOT TAKEN A PUBLIC POSITION. FRAGA'S
"REFORMA DEMOCRATICA" POSTPONED THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF ITS
PROGRAM PENDING CLARIFICATION. THE FIVE CONSTITUENTS
IN THE "EQUIPO" OF CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTIES --
PRINCIPALLY RUIZ GIMENEZ AND GIL ROBLES -- ISSUED A
STATEMENT SAYING THAT NEW GOVT STILL LACKS POPULAR MANDATE

WHICH ONLY A CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY COULD PROVIDE, BUT INDICATING A WILLINGNESS TO DIALOGUE, THE PSOE ISSUED A SIMILAR STATEMENT. THE OTHER ELEMENTS OF THE PLATA-JUNTA HAVE GENERALLY TAKEN A HOSTILE STAND TOWARDS SUAREZ. THE COUNCIL OF POLITICAL FORCES IN CATALONIA, WHICH GROUPS THE KEY DEMOCRATIC OPPOSITION PARTIES, REPORTEDLY HAS ADOPTED A NEGATIVE POSTURE WITH RESPECT TO COOPERATION WITH THE NEW PREMIER. (PRESS REPORTS THAT CATALAN SOCIAL DEMOCRAT JOSEP PALLACH WILL NOT TAKE A POST.)

5. A NUMBER OF COMMENTATORS ESTIMATE THAT SO FAR THE BIGGEST WINNER IN THE PRESENT CRISIS IS FERNANDEZ MIRANDA, THE PRESIDENT OF THE CORTES AND COUNCIL OF THE REALM, WHO HAS ALLEGEDLY SUCCEEDED IN MAKING HIS ROLE EVEN MORE IMPORTANT. SEVERAL COMMENTATORS, IN REPORTING THE COMINGS AND GOINGS AT THE PRESIDENCY, SAY THAT ALFONSO OSORIO AND MARTIN VILLA ARE PLAYING KEY ROLES IN ASSISTING SUAREZ IN PICKING MEMBERS FOR HIS CABINET.

6. THERE IS A RATHER DISTURBING THREAD - BORN OF THE CONFUSION OVER THE CABINET - THAT SUAREZ MAY NOT BE PREMIER VERY LONG. SOME SPECULATE THAT THE CRISIS WILL DELAY THE REFORM PROGRAM AND RESULT IN THE POSTPONEMENT OF THE REFERENDUM - OTHERS THAT IT WILL ACCELERATE THE PROGRAM, SHOWING THE DEGREE OF CONFUSION THAT EXISTS. AT THE SAME TIME, THE MEDIA HAVE COMMENTED FAVORABLY ON SUAREZ'S MAIDEN SPEECH AND ARE WILLING TO GIVE HIM A CHANCE. STABLER

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